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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 15, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BILL HUIZENGA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LOOK FOR AREAS OF POTENTIAL AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it is slowly dawning on some of my Republican colleagues, who were so gleeful about shutting down the government 2 weeks ago, that there will be no reward for not ruining the economy. Some think they should get a prize when they stop the senseless punishment of the American people, paying our employees not to work, and inflict-

ing needless disruption on the lives and costs to the taxpayers—billions of dollars.

It appears that the public has had a hard time figuring all of this out, but has understandably concluded that most of the blame is due to the Republican crusade against health care reform and their reckless choice of tactics.

Is it possible that something constructive can come from the Tea Party debacle? Absolutely. Maybe we can do our job and look for areas of potential agreement.

Last week, PAUL RYAN and I continued a long-standing partnership on agricultural reform. We led a debate showing the will of the House to limit subsidy for the terribly flawed and expensive crop insurance program by slightly reducing the lavish subsidies to the largest agribusinesses. It is not the final answer by any means. There is no guarantee the Ag conferees will pay attention to the will of the House, but it is a clear area in that we can reduce spending and improve programs for most farmers and ranchers.

Maybe we could find bipartisan agreement that we should not slash infrastructure spending even further. Let's have a hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee and explore how to fund the transportation bill that expires in 348 days and creates a devastating infrastructure cliff.

If people are concerned about the deficit and government spending, maybe the House could finish work on its own spending bills. My Republican friends shut down the appropriations process more than 2 months ago. It might be instructive, before demanding more reductions in funding services, to see if they can actually pass their own version of the budget. If they can't, maybe they would reconsider taking government spending down to the levels of 1962, which is what their budget program requires, when America had

140 million fewer people, when there was one-third the number of senior citizens.

Regardless, their pleas to negotiate ought to mean that they stop refusing to negotiate with the Senate about the budget. If they are serious and not cynical, they will appoint their conference committees and stop 6 months of stalling.

Let's debate whether, at a time of retrenchment at the Pentagon, we really need to spend two-thirds of a trillion dollars over the next 10 years on nuclear weapons we don't need and cannot use for American security. Ninety percent of the expensive, dangerous stockpile is unnecessary for even the most ardent believer in nuclear deterrence. It has just morphed into a grotesque jobs program.

Should America sign away its mineral wealth to foreign companies for free? Before we cut investments in our people and our future, maybe we should reexamine the Mining Act of 1872, which remains on the books exactly as it was signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant.

These are areas worthy not just of debate but of real, honest negotiation and compromise and action. We can agree on areas to get more value for the taxpayer, help those who need it most, not those who need it least, and allow the process of government to work. If you try in good faith, the American system of government is not as bad as it looks.

THE TIME FOR SOLUTIONS IS NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the time for solutions is now. The American people expect their elected leaders to come to the table, work together, and put people above politics.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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